

## PENDULUM LEGS



Strong hip abductors are important for side-to-side stability, and the ability to make quick transitions may prevent falls to the side. This exercise for hip abductors teaches participants to successfully do repetitive lateral weight transitions.

### ***Benefits »***

- ⦿ Strengthens hip abductors.
- ⦿ Enhances balance awareness during lateral weight transitions.
- ⦿ Uses reciprocal, sequential motion between lower and upper body.

### ***Set It Up »***

You will not need any special equipment for this exercise, unless you choose to use light ankle weights for some participants.

### ***How to Do It »***

#### **The Start**

- ⦿ Participants stand tall behind their sturdy chair or other appropriate balance support (facing a handrail or using their walker).
- ⦿ Both hands should be placed on balance support to start (tightly or lightly).
- ⦿ Abs are braced, shoulder blades back and down, feet shoulder-width apart and parallel, and knees soft.

#### **The Moves**

Use the following cues.

- ⦿ Keeping the core stable and as still as possible, lift the right leg up to the side.
- ⦿ The lift just needs to be a few inches; 4 to 6 inches (10-15 centimeters) is adequate.
- ⦿ Bring the legs back together for just a moment.
- ⦿ Lift the other leg as soon as the other comes down—just like a pendulum. The transition in the center is just for a moment.
- ⦿ It will help participants if you cue them to allow knees to soften just a bit between weight transfers. (It kind of feels like a little bounce, a quick “down, up” in between opposing leg lifts.)

### ***Take It Further »***

- ⦿ Do slightly higher lifts to the side.
- ⦿ Use light ankle weights.

### ***Give It More Balance »***

- ⦿ Cue participants to *really notice* the feeling of each weight transfer. Noticing this feeling enhances their kinesthetic learning.
- ⦿ Reduce balance support just a bit. Hands hover over the back of the chair, for example.

- ⦿ Add opposing arm lifts.
  - As the right leg lifts to the side, lift the left arm up and directly overhead (it looks like the arm movement used in the classic jumping jack, but with only one arm).
  - Switch sides and lift the left leg to the side and the right arm overhead.
  - Repeat for 8 to 12 repetitions, switching sides each time.
  - Arms should be lifted overhead, not out to the side. Have them try it both ways—they will learn more and learn it better with their own bodies. Sampling an activity in two ways is great inside/out learning! Participants should notice that their balance is better with arms overhead instead of out to the side.
- ⦿ Do the activity on a soft carpet or lawn.
- ⦿ Stand on an easy balance pad, if available and if you can supervise personally.



### ***Keep It Safe »***

For the greatest balance stability, cue participants to keep their torso quiet, tall, and still. Comment on how core stability steadies the body against limb movements. Allow them to use balance support as needed for them to feel safe. The following changes will make this activity easier:

- ⦿ Participants can lightly touch their foot out to the side, instead of lifting the leg up.
- ⦿ Participants can perform multiple repetitions on one side, and then switch sides instead of alternating each time.